

They Refused To Harken (Zechariah 7:8-14)

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They Refused to Harken (Zechariah 7:8-14)
The story is told of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who after endured long receiving lines at the white House. He complained that no one really paid any attention to what was said. One day, during a reception, he decided to try an experiment. To each person who passed down the line and shook his hand, he murmured, "I murdered my grand mother this morning". The guests responded with phrases like, "Marvelous! Keep up the good work. We are proud of you. God bless you sir". It was not until the end of the line, while greeting the ambassador from Bolivia, that

his words were actually heard. The ambassador leaned over and whispered in response "I'm sure she had it coming." In our text we find a people who, despite the declarations of the scripture and the warnings and threatenings of the prophets, they refused to listen to God's word. In the end this rejection of God's word cost them dearly. So often the accounts of the children of Israel are a parallel of our Christian lives. We attend upon the worship of God, we nod responsively and yet our heart is as a hard

I. The Statement of Their Redeemer
VS 8-10 "Thus speaketh... of Hosts" God is speaking to them, Jehovah, the self-existent one. Note "Lord of Hosts" Reminds them of that Joshua encounter

The Lord who redeemed and brought them into the land.

A. Reasonable Commands - These commanding statements from the Lord are not outlandish and unattainable, but reasonable and righteous. Render true judgments in judicial matters. How hard having a little mercy and compassion toward one another. The widow, the fatherless, the stranger, the poor represent a part of society vulnerable to being taken advantage of. It's only right, reasonable to watch out for them. Guard your heart don't let hate and bitterness develop in heart. Here is the root of the problem, our heart. All God is

B. Relating Commands - I found it very interesting that all these commands that God is re-emphasizing are relational commands, person to person commands. God could have reminded them of the first of the commandments: No other Gods before me, or no graven images. But no he dealt with the relational commands. These are the true test of our love for God. ³ 1 John 4:20-21 Jesus said in John 13:34-35 God is still speaking. It matters how we treat one another, it matters what we think ^{are we listening?} in our minds and hearts.

II. The Sin of Their Rebellion - vs 11
Have you ever seen the toddler cross their arms, turn their head and say "No!" This seed of rebellion in the heart of man develops and shows

1) ...heart is as an adamant stone. We read our bibles and check off our lists and yet we stop our ears to what is truly being said. And like the children of Israel, when we refuse to hear and obey, devastating consequences lay in the path ahead. I want to draw out of this text three truths for us to receive and remember as warnings, lest we become hearers of the word and not doers of the word of God. Notice first of all...

2) ...all god is saying here is just do right, these are reasonable. 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

3) 1 John 4:20-21 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

4) John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

1) 1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,
and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...

2) It never reached their heart, it never reached the center
of their reasoning, to be translated into the action of
obedience! They went of far as to even stop up their
ears, to block off even the physical route of hearing. They
didn't want to hear it! We may not wear robes and ride
camels like they did, but we can be a whole like them.
"Well I don't like what he said, I not gonna go back down
there to that church." "I'll just quit reading that section of
the bible, that's old testament any way." We plug up our
ears and refuse his words!

3) ...only to be rejected, to bounce off the target, never to
penetrate. The pleas and admonishments of the prophet
simply went in one ear and out the other and rolled off
out hearts like water off a ducks back.

4) Hebrews 2:1-3 Therefore we ought to give the more
earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at
any time we should let them slip. ... (3) How shall we
escape, if we neglect so great salvation...

its self quickly. This rebellion is wicked sin before God.
A. They Refused His Words - ^{15:23}15:11, 12, 13 - "Harken"
means to listen intently usually in the imperative
sense. This means that to harken to some one
~~means~~ means to hear with the intent to do or obey
what is being said. The human ear is an
amazing thing, sound waves into the ear canal
the vibrations are communicated down to the
ear drum by the tiny hammer anvil and stirrup bones.
These vibrations are then processed and understood
by the brain to have meaning. The ears of these people
were working fine they heard what was being said
nodded responsibly yet that is as far as it went. ②

B. They Rejected His Reach - ^{15:23}15:11b, 12,
Pulled away shoulder. What a picture that
is given here. Mom and Dad have you ever
pleaded with that teenager, reaching out to
draw them in and that shoulder jerks away
in rebellion and anger. This is the picture here
God sending his prophets to lovingly bring them
under his yoke and like a stubborn ox the pull
away. ^{15:23}15:13 Their heart, seat of emotions and will
had become hardened beyond piercing, beyond
scratching. Oh how often has God word rang
true and targeted our hearts only to be rejected. ③

III. The Sorrow of Their Recompense

This is a dangerous condition to live in when
we see how God dealt with his own people.

Heb 2:173 ④ A salvation that has rewards &

responsibilities. There is a recompense for refusing

A. The Sentence from God ^{VS 13 C} - What is God's reaction to rebellion it is wrath. Rom. 2:5, God loves his children he will not coddle them, he will not ignore their rebellion. But he will meet their rebellion with wrath, punishment, judgment in order to break our adamant stone hearts in cling to Him. ³ God may send his

B. The Silence of God - VS 13 Remember God has cried unto them. He has sent his law and his prophets, they refuse, even as far as to absentmindedly plug their ears. Therefore when wrath comes, God says I will not hear. As the father has no reaction to the child ^{during} the scolding, so God the father will not hear their cries. Their ⁴ sin has separated them →

C. The Scattering by God - VS 14 A whirlwind was sent by God. The desolator affects of which destroyed, dispersed, and devastated their lives. God has the ability to send upheaval, to allow destruction upon the lives of his people to gain their attention. He can scatter you comfortable little nest, he can ⁵ make your world as a →

IV. Closing - The great reformer Martin Luther said: "You may as well quit reading and hearing the Word of God, and give it to the devil, if you do not desire to live according to it." ^{children all} Israel on

- 1) ...for refusing God's word. Hebrews 12:6-7 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?
- 2) Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath...
- 3) ...send His wrath in many different ways, but we can be assured, if we are His children, then he will chasten: Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.
- 4) Their sin has separated them from God: *Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. Jeremiah 11:11 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.*
- 5) ...make your world as a barren desert, a wasteland in order to crack that hardened heart. But these consequences can be avoided now: *Hebrews 3:7-8 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts.. 2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*
- 6) ...of Israel upon taking the promised land said: Joshua 24:21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. Joshua 24:24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.